

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 038219

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 38219 ACTION ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC
POSTS SECRETARY LONDON PARIS MOSCOW IBADAN KADUNA
DOUALA CINCENR 18 FEBRUARY 76.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 038219 TOSEC 040036

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NI

SUBJECT: SITREP ON NIGERIA

1. THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION AND AMERICAN EMBASSY IN
LAGOS WERE STONED FEBRUARY 17 BY 300-500 STUDENTS SHOUTING
QUOTE THEY MUST GO UNQUOTE. THE BRITISH, WHOSE BUILDING
SUFFERED THE GREATEST DAMAGE, WERE ATTACKED BECAUSE OF A
REPORT PUBLISHED IN LAGOS TODAY, THAT LT. COL. B. S. DIMKA,
STILL THE ONLY PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED PLOTTER, VISITED THE
HIGH COMMISSION IMMEDIATELY AFTER ANNOUNCING THE OVERTHROW
OF THE MUHAMMED GOVERNMENT ON FEBRUARY 13. WE WERE IN-
CLUDED IN THE DEMONSTRATION BECAUSE OF RUMORS THAT THE CIA
WAS INVOLVED IN THE COUP.

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2. ELSEWHERE IN NIGERIA, DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY

LIMITED TO MOURNING AND PRAISING THE LATE HEAD OF STATE. SHOCK AND XENOPHOBIA ARE RUNNING HIGH, HOWEVER, AND THE PUBLIC MOOD MIGHT STILL BE TENSE DURING A LARGE DEMONSTRATION PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 20 TO COMMEMORATE MUHAMMED. REUTERS, THE MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL NEWS BUREAU IN NIGERIA, WAS SHUT DOWN FEBRUARY 17 FOLLOWING THE ARREST OF ITS BRITISH CHIEF AND TWO NIGERIAN EMPLOYEES, ALLEGEDLY FOR PUBLISHING UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF A TRIBAL DISTURBANCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA.

3. THE AMERICAN TENNIS PLAYERS WHOSE MATCH WAS BROKEN UP YESTERDAY BY A HANDFUL OF NIGERIAN SOLDIERS WERE GIVEN A SPECIAL PLANE BY THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THEM TO ACCRA EARLY THIS MORNING. THEY HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY REACHED ROME WHERE THEIR NEXT TOURNAMENT BEGINS FEBRUARY 18.

4. EXCEPT FOR DEMONSTRATIONS, LAGOS AND OTHER NIGERIAN CITIES HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL. NIGERIAN BORDERS AND AIRPORTS REMAIN CLOSED, HOWEVER, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE AUTHORITIES ARE STILL LOOKING FOR LT. COL. DIMKA--AND POSSIBLY OTHER PLOTTERS. A CURFEW IS IN EFFECT FROM 8:00 PM UNTIL 6:00 AM.

5. UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON STILL PLANS TO VISIT LAGOS FEBRUARY 23-25 AS PART OF A TRIP TO FOUR AFRICAN NATIONS (ZAIRE, NIGERIA, EGYPT, AND ALGERIA).

INGERSOLL UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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